

SAFETY ALERT

Light vehicle drives off bench in open cut mine

INCIDENT

A light vehicle drove onto a bench in an open cut mine and then, when exiting the bench, drove off the low wall.

CIRCUMSTANCES

A driver of a light vehicle was requested to escort a contractor's vehicle onto a bench so the contractor could perform routine maintenance work. The conditions at the time were bright daylight during the middle of day, and dry weather. It was the operator's first shift back at work after a break.

The operator requested permission from the open cut examiner to go through witch's hats that were placed at the foot of the ramp to access the bench. He drove onto the bench where he left the contractors to perform their work.

While exiting the bench he drove over a 4.5 metre low wall and the vehicle landed on its roof. The operator had been on the bench for approximately one minute.



The light vehicle at rest after being driven off the bench (left); and a view at the top of the bench from which the vehicle fell (right).

INVESTIGATION

The operator confused a small amount of material on the bench for the windrow of the ramp. The ramp windrow finished at the same point as the edge of the top of the low wall.

The top of the ramp was not clearly delineated. The edge of the low wall was not delineated. There was no barrier to warn the operator he was approaching the edge of the ramp.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All personnel should notify the relevant mining official when they are entering a work area.
2. All operators should receive positive communication from the mining supervisor and any machinery operator in the work area they are entering.
3. Operators should be familiar with their work environment before working in the area.
4. An inspection should be undertaken to ensure that surface transport management plan requirements are in place. The surface transport management plan should be reviewed and, if found deficient, should be strengthened.
5. All operators should wear seat belts while operating machinery.

NOTE: Please ensure all relevant people in your organisation receive a copy of this Safety Alert, and are informed of its content and recommendations. This Safety Alert should be processed in a systematic manner through the mine's information and communication process. It should also be placed on the mine's notice board.

Signed



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